

Montana Outdoors



Forty-fourth Annual
Photo Issue

Montana Outdoors

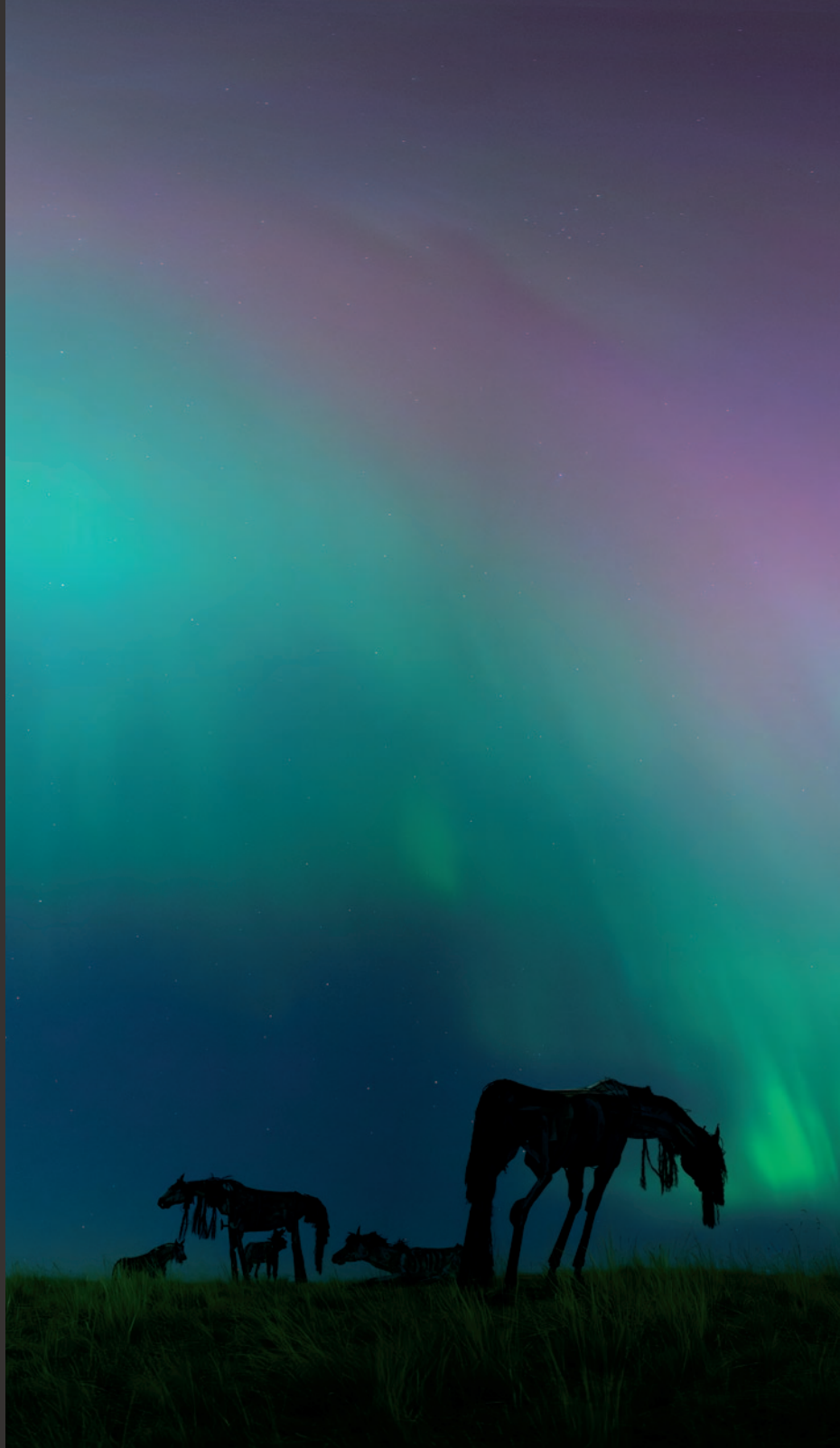
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

If this Steller's jay looks cold, that's because it is. Photographer Craig Barfoot, of Polson, shot the chilled corvid last winter in a forested area northwest of town where he'd paused from putting up firewood at a friend's house. "That was during that cold snap last January, when it got down to 30 below," he says. "The woods had fresh snow, and this jay had been feeding at a bird feeder when I saw him resting in a larch. Usually, they get spooked, but it was so cold that morning he was in something akin to a fluffed-up torpor and just sat there."

Barfoot ran to his pickup and grabbed his camera, hoping the jay would stay put. "He stayed still while I kept my distance and used a long lens so as not to disturb him," he says. Disturbing a bird or any wildlife in bitter cold can cause them to expend precious energy, Barfoot explains. "Another challenge was getting a clear shot through the branches of the larch. And I had poor light, so I had to use a high ISO in combination with a relatively fast shutter speed, which helped capture all that feather and snow detail."

Barfoot grew up in the Black Hills where his dad was a logger. He earned his graduate degree in fish and wildlife management at Montana State University, did his graduate work surveying fish in southeastern Montana prairie streams, near Ekalaka, not far from his childhood homeland, and has worked as a fisheries biologist for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes since 2000. "I picked up photography years ago and have messed around with it ever since, and it's become a real passion," he says. "I mostly take unusual photos of unusual animals like frogs, toads, and birds—like this Steller's jay—that many people have never heard of."

—Tom Dickson, editor



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LANCE GILLILAND

Above: Aurora borealis over the Bleu Horses sculptures installation near Three Forks

CRAIG BARFOOT

Front cover: Steller's jay

KELIN KELLY

Right: Pale morning dun mayfly on a grass stem







LEE HULL

Top: Bighorn lamb,
Glacier National Park

BILL KINNEY

Middle: Mule deer fawn
in mixed grass prairie,
Big Belt Mountains

JOHN CARUSO

Bottom: Bison calf,
CSKT Bison Range

DUANE HUIE

Opposite: Pronghorn
fawn, central Montana

**STEVEN
GABRIEL GNAM**

Right: Westslope
cutthroat trout rising
in the Flathead River

ARNIE GIDLOW

Below: Evening fishing
on the Missouri River





**JESS
McGLOTHLIN**

Above: Chatting and fishing
the Missouri River

JAKOB BURLESON

Left: Releasing a rainbow
trout on Hebgen Lake



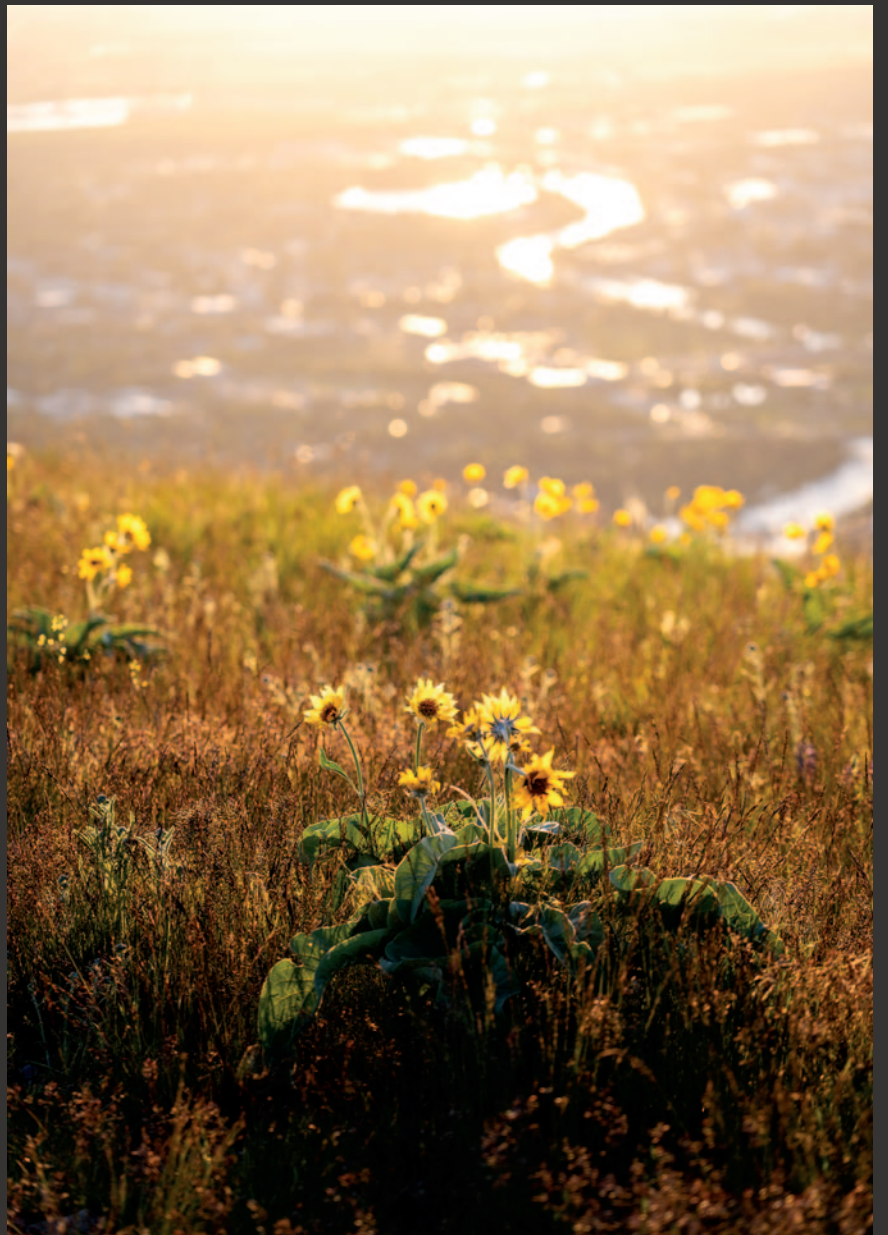
DAVID LEITNER

Above: Decision Point,
confluence of the
Missouri and
Marias Rivers

JOHN CHART

Right: Golden eagle
near Augusta





CHANCE STACK

Above: Arrowleaf balsamroot
on Mount Sentinel, Missoula

DONALD M. JONES

Left: Clay-colored sparrow,
Mission Valley



**NEAL & MARY JANE
MISHLER**

Above: Black-crowned
night heron at Benton Lake
National Wildlife Refuge

CONNIE FISKE

Right: Great blue heron
with a garter snake
near Helena

KEVIN LEAGUE

Opposite: A breeding
pair of great blue herons
in a rookery







**EDWARD
MORETH**

Right: Pronghorn
buck



**WARD
HANNING**

Top: Ring-necked
pheasant, Bitterroot
Valley

KYLE C. MOON

Left: Short-eared owl,
Benton Lake National
Wildlife Refuge



DONNA RIDGWAY

Top: Black bear near Gibson Dam

JOHN CARUSO

Top: Black bear reaches for berries on the CSKT Bison Range

STEVEN AKRE

Top: Spring black bear near, Lolo National Forest





DONALD M. JONES

Left: Bathing black bear,
Mission Valley

RANDY BEACHAM

Below: Black bear with cubs
forages on huckleberries,
Purcell Mountains







JAY STYLES

Top: Natural Pier Bridge
near Alberton

TRACY SCOTT

Above: Pedestrian bridge
near Lake McDonald Lodge,
Glacier National Park

WILLIAM WOESSNER

Above: Kootenai Falls
Swinging Bridge
near Troy

ERIN BRAATEN

Opposite: The Old Belton Bridge
over the Middle Fork of the
Flathead River near West Glacier



SHARON DEWART-HANSEN

Top left: Rock wren, Grizzly Gulch near Helena

CRAIG & LIZ LARCOM

Top right: Barn swallow, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge

JOHN CARLSON

Middle left: Mountain chickadee, Yellowstone County

MICHAEL SLEETING

Middle right: Chestnut-backed chickadee, Lolo National Forest

SHANE SATER

Bottom left: Pine siskin feeds on wild sunflowers, Missoula

TYLER BAIN

Bottom right: Violet-green swallow near Coal Banks Landing



STEVE DUBOIS

Above left: A lark sparrow on alert

CAROL POLICH

Above right: Female Western bluebird near Three Forks



STEVE DUBOIS

Top: Western tanagers pause during migration for a drink in Bozeman



KRISTI POWELL

Above: Sedimentary
rock formations at
Makoshika State Park



CRAIG BARFOOT

Above right: Plains spadefoot toad, Petroglyph Canyon

JEREMIE HOLLMAN

Right: Greater short horned lizard, eastern Montana





MARK PETERS

Above: Mule deer buck

JOEL ENGBRETSON

Right: White-tailed deer buck

LAURA VERHAEGHE

Opposite: White-tailed doe in late fall foraging in the Lolo National Forest







ERIC HEIDLE

*Top: Quaking aspens
in fall on the
Cave Mountain Trail*

NATHAN COOPER

*Above: Canada geese
in corn field stubble*



SHAWN T. STEWART

*Top: Grizzly in a
smoky sunset,
Carbon County*

**NEAL & MARY JANE
MISHLER**

*Above: Cottonwood leaves
on snow, Great Falls*





KEVIN LEAGUE

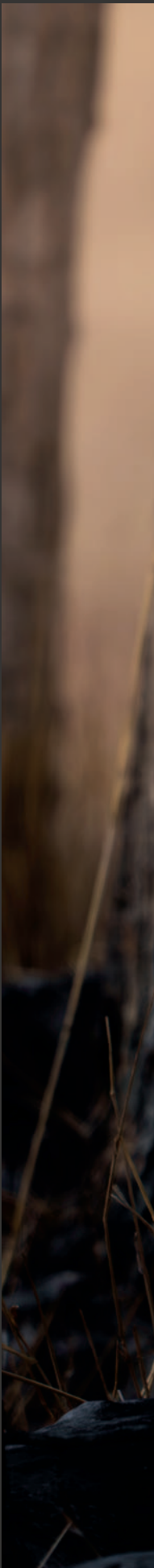
Montana's Little Blackfoot River empties into the nearby Clark Fork River with the Flint Creek Mountains shimmering in the distance.



LISA SAVARD

Spawning rainbow trout,
Georgetown Lake







MATTHEW BERTELLOTTI

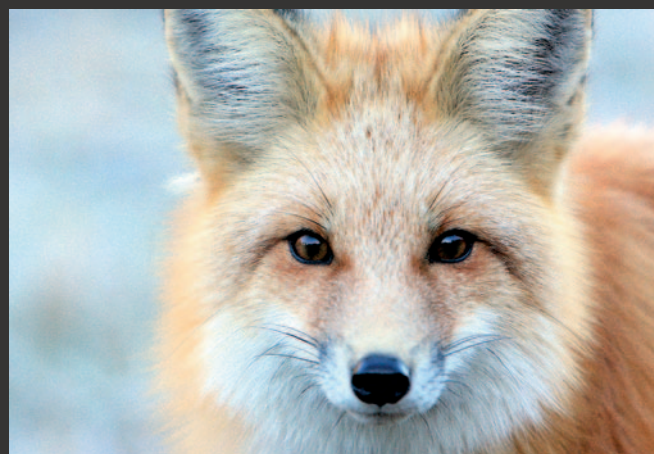
Opposite top: Red fox
in prairie grass

THOMAS WRIGHT

Opposite bottom: Red fox
with a marmot

RONALD PAUL

Below: Red fox kits at
play near Ennis

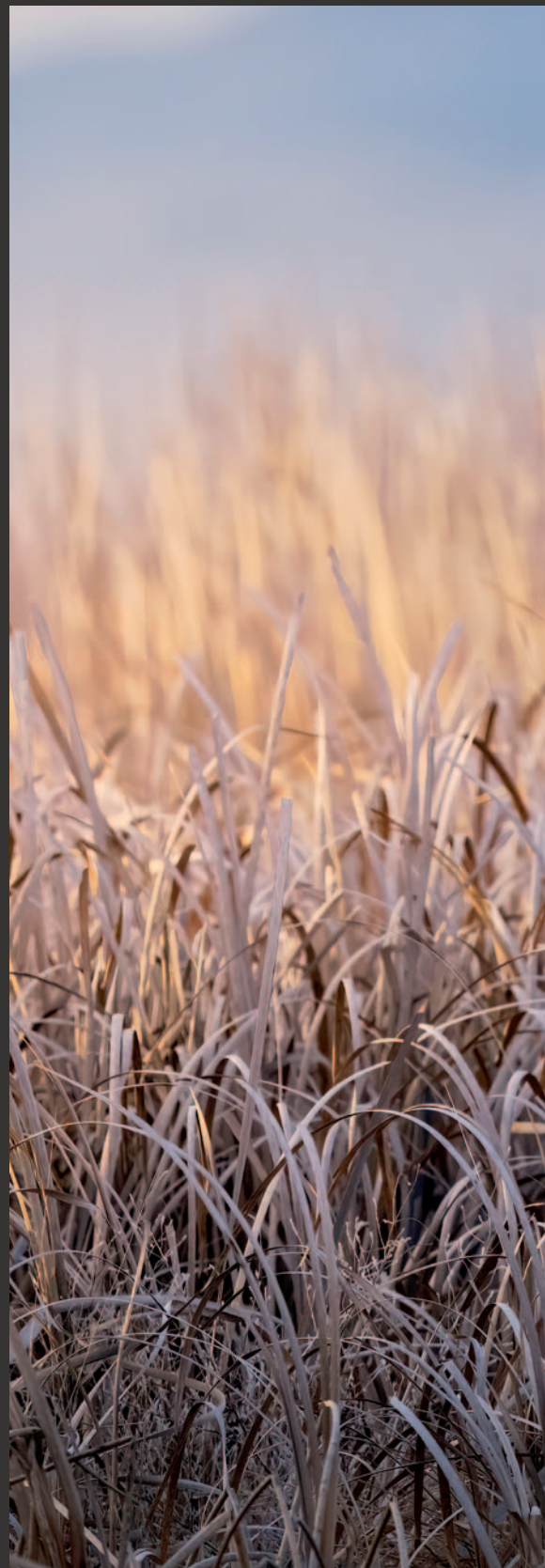


BILL DELWICHE

Above: Red fox closeup

CHRIS AUCH

Left: Red fox in a forest
near Hamilton



BILL KINNEY

Top: Sandhill crane,
Big Belt Mountains

CRAIG MILLER

Above: Sandhill
crane, Freezout
Lake Wildlife
Management Area

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Right: A Sandhill crane
at sunrise near Helena





MARREA MATTHEWS

Top left: Calypso orchid near Darby

JANICE MILLER

Bottom left: Bee in Prickly pear cactus flower

JESSE LEE VARNADO

Top middle: Snowberry clearwing moth

DAN ELLISON

Middle: Calliope hummingbird on milkweed

ANDREA DENINO

Bottom middle: Moth on Forget-Me-Not

DEE LINNELL BLANK

Top right: Yellow lady's slipper orchid

MICHAEL SLEETING

Bottom right: Castilleja, also known as Indian paintbrush



KELIN KELLY

Top left: Melissa blue butterfly on a daisy

ELIZABETH MOORE

Middle left: Western sulfur butterfly on gumweed

LISA WRIGHT

bottom left: Mariposa lily in the Little Belt foothills

JEREMIE HOLLMAN

Top middle: Prairie smoke

COLTER OLMSTEAD

Top right: Lilac flower detail, Missoula

SHANE SATER

Middle right: Viceroy butterfly on swamp verbena leaf, Lake Helena

ESTELLE SHUTTLEWORTH

Bottom right: Bitterroot blooms



LORNA MASON

Grizzly bear, Many Glacier,
Glacier National Park



JORDAN LEFLER

White-tailed doe at Bowman
Lake, Glacier National Park

**VICTOR PEREZ
CARRILLO**

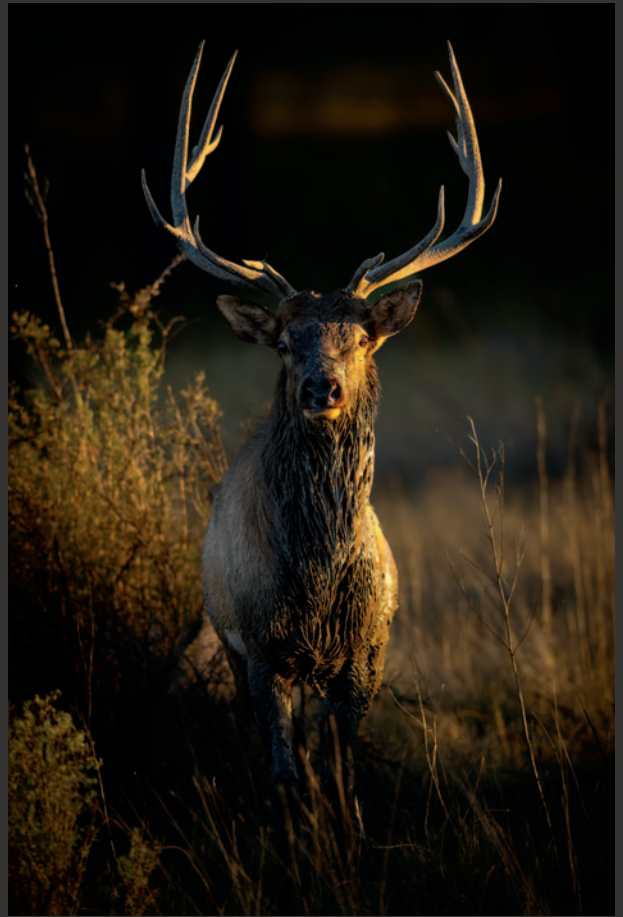
Below: A bull elk in
sagebrush near
Gardiner

CRAIG MILLER

Right: Muddy bull
elk in the Upper
Missouri River Breaks
National Monument

RANDY SMITH

Bottom: Bull elk
at sunset, Upper
Missouri River Breaks
National Monument





LAURA VERHAEGHE

Top: Bull elk in early spring in the Blackfoot Clearwater Game Range

SEAN R. HEAVEY

Above: Bull elk gather on the plains near Winnett



JACKSON BLAND

Above: Fall colors on the Madison River

ZACH SHATTUCK

Below: Juvenile channel catfish, Powder River

THOMAS DAVID RITTER

Above: Pallid sturgeon, Missouri River







**CHRIS
McGOWAN**

Right: Fall colors
along the
Sun River

**DOUG
STEVENS**

Opposite: The
constellation
Orion chasing
the sunset over
Flathead River,
Mission Valley



NAME
direct Description



RANDY BEACHAM

Top left: Aerial view of an old-growth forest, Purcell Mountains in the Kootenai National Forest



LUKE DURAN

Opposite middle: Fall foliage
at Cataract Falls near Augusta,
Lewis & Clark National Forest

JOHN FECTEAU

Opposite bottom: Aspen leaf
on moss and lichen,
Glacier National Park

MARREA MATTHEWS

Above: Pygmy nuthatch,
Hamilton



JOEL MAES

Top: A pika forages at a mountain spring in the Anaconda Range

KURT CUNNINGHAM

Above left: Prairie dog clan at First People's Buffalo Jump State Park

RANDY BEACHAM

Above right: Hoary marmots on Ewing Mountain in the Purcell Range



ROLAND TAYLOR

Left: Golden-mantled
ground squirrel, Lake Inez

CONNIE FISKE

Below: American marten
near Silver Gate

KALON BAUGHN

Bottom: Bobcat in the
foothills of the Helena
National Forest





JERRY TAYLOR

*Top: Female kestrel
after a spring storm
north of Bozeman*

JULIE BETTS

*Above: Great horned
owl talons*



STEVE LUFT

Top: Leaf floating on
the Kootenai River

ELSIE MYERS

Above: Water droplets
on an aquatic plant
with duckweed



KERRY NICKOU

Top: Bull moose
near Babb

CHARLES RENFRO

Above: A bull and cow
moose touch noses
during the moose rut

LEE NELSON

Right: Cow and
bull moose at
Georgetown Lake





THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



CHUCK HANEY

Dawn Mist Falls in the Belly River,
Glacier National Park



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